

Merging two cultures and creating a single purpose



Client need

A leading communications network provider made a major acquisition of an organization of equal size, increasing their influence in the industry. The addressable market doubled with the new product and services mix, creating a significant, immediate opportunity to create cost and revenue synergies.

The organization recognized that culture would be a gating factor to capturing these opportunities and delivering on their commitments. Culture was a lever both companies had paid less attention to in past acquisitions, resulting in a patchwork of organizational values, relationships, and ways of working. In fact, according to results from the enterprise risk assessment leading up to the merger, culture ranked as the second highest risk to the organization's success.

To realize the aspirations of the newly-combined organization, the organization partnered with BTS to help align all employees to a single purpose, vision, values, and ways of working.



The solution...

BTS addressed major parts of the culture and strategy together by engaging the organization at various levels. The following approach would allow employees to understand, define, and engage the organization in its future state:

01

A **culture diagnostic** that would help employees understand the current culture of both organizations, and uncover the biggest cultural strengths and risks within each that could either accelerate or hinder progress.

02

Executive Alignment Sessions during which the organization's top 25 leaders defined and committed to the future-state purpose, vision, values, and ways of working. In addition, leaders prioritized the most practical and tangible shifts that the organization needed to implement. By identifying the pivotal moments in their operating cadence, leaders recognized the need to alter their behavior according to the aspirational values and culture.

03

Virtual Working Sessions that pressure-tested pivotal moments across various levels, functions, and geographies in the organization and gathered data on the existing knowledge gaps.

04

A **Culture Playbook** that codified the most pivotal moments in their operating cadence in terms that captured the aforementioned values and culture.

06

Defining **leader expectations** linked to the vision level by level, embedding them into the performance management and leadership development process.

05

An improved structure for **team meetings and workshops** intended to accelerate the transformation and engage leaders with the new vision in a fun, engaging, and impactful way.



Results

As a result of this work, the organization devised simple yet meaningful ways of working that leaders across the organization created and "owned." The culture playbook and leader expectations brought aspirations from words on a page to fruition.

One year after the work was concluded, the organization completed another Enterprise Risk Assessment. As a result, culture had decreased from the second-largest risk at the time of acquisition to the twelfth-riskiest factor. The organization also accelerated the results of the integration, delivering on synergy target commitments one year ahead of schedule.

Successful integration requires cultural buy-in at every level of an organization. By grounding purpose, vision, and values in mutually-attainable behaviors, employees from both organizations became motivated, embrace change, and operate in an agile manner.



"I am really encouraged that we got momentum [before the acquisition was finalized], and the alignment session occurred in the week we joined forces as one company. It sends a very positive message to the entire company and reinforces the importance of culture to our future success."

"This work is foundational in defining who we are and the opportunities we have in becoming a leader in the industry."

"In truth, the culture work [the BTS] team led with us has mobilized our teams and served as a rally cry throughout the pandemic. Serving as our True North! Very cool."

